

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAA-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 AID-05 /070 W
-----118297 140531Z /62

R 130242Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9029
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, AF
SUBJECT: LEADER OF COUP'S TANK FORCES NAMED MINISTER OF INTERIOR,
BUT LOSES HIS DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER TITLE

1. ACCORDING TO A JULY 9 ANNOUNCEMENT, FORMER DEPUTY
PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS MAJOR
ASLAM WATANJAR HAS BEEN NAMED THE NEW MINISTER OF INTERIOR.
THE ANNOUNCEMENT ADDED THAT SAYYED MOHAMMAD GULABZOI HAD
BEEN APPOINTED AS WATANJAR'S REPLACEMENT AT THE COMMUNICATIONS
MINISTRY.

2. COMMENT: AS DEPUTY COMMANDER OF ONE OF THE ARMORED
BRIGADES, WATANJAR LED THE TANK FORCES DURING THE APRIL 27
REVOLUTION, AND WAS THEREAFTER SUITABLY REWARDED BY BEING
NAMED ONE OF THEREE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTERS, AS WELL AS
COMMUNICATIONS MINISTER. HIS NEW JOB, REPLACING NOOR AHMAD NOOR,
SENT AS AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED STATES, WOULD LOGICALLY
REPRESENT A PROMOTION IN TERMS OF POLITICAL POWER,
ESPECIALLY IN AN AUTHORITARIAN REGIME SUCH AS THIS ONE.
MEDIA COVERAGE OF WATANJAR IN HIS NEW ROLE, HOWEVER, DROPPED
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HIS DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER TITLE COMPLETELY, AND THE FOREIGN
MINISTRY OFFICE OF PROTOCOL HAS CONFIRMED THAT HE IS
NO LONGER A DEPUTY PM. THIS LEAVES ONLY ONE OFFICIAL AT THIS
RANK, FOREIGN MINISTER HAFIZULLAH AMIN. AMIN IS NOW INDISPUTABLY
THE NUMBER TWO IN THE REGIME, ESPECIALLY AS A RESULT OF THE
EXILE OF FORMER PARCHAMIST LEADERS (WHICH INCLUDED BABRAK
KARMAL, THE THIRD DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER APPOINTED IMMEDIATELY

AFTER THE REVOLUTION).

3. THE CIVILIAN LEADERSHIP OF THE PARTY IS ATTEMPTING, SUCCESSFULLY SO FAR, TO ESTABLISH ITS CONTROL OVER ALL LEVERS OF POLITICAL POWER, BUT IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER THE MILITARY WILL PASSIVELY ACCEPT A SECONDARY STATUS. INDICATIONS OF ANY NEGATIVE REACTION TO THE APPARENT "DEMOTION" OF WATANJAR, TRULY ONE OF THE TWO KEY MILITARY FIGURES IN THE APRIL TAKEOVER (DEFENSE MINISTER QADER DELIVERED THE AIR FORCE), WILL BE WATCHED FOR CAREFULLY BY ALL OBSERVERS.

4. WE HAVE VIRTUALLY NO INFORMATION ON MINISTER GULABZOI, OTHER THAN THAT HE WAS THE FORMER AIDE-DE-CAMP TO TARAKI, APPEARED IN AIR FORCE UNIFORM AT THE "GREAT LEADER'S" SIDE IN PRACTIALLY ALL PRESS PHOTOS, AND SPORTS A MAGNIFICENT JERRY COLONNA STYLE MUSTACHE.
DUBS

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Message Attributes

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